

is an expression, it's a way to release, relax, communicate, and to beautify. And that is what KaVonya does, she's an artist. She turns eyesores into beautiful eye pieces to look at. Right now she has been given the charge to lead the effort at her school to paint murals to represent the school spirit. This meant presenting herself as a leader in a way that other students would follow and listen to. She had the task of all the preliminary planning, choosing fellow artists that could help her complete this awesome responsibility. This project is scheduled to be completed May 1, 2013. KaVonya has plans to attend college to study art. She says, "Life is too short to not pursue your dreams. I dream of art, academic achievement, and completing my college degree . . ." I wish her much success.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. KaVonya Walker for her current active role as a student making a difference as an artist.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO U.S. BANK

#### HON. ERIK PAULSEN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 9, 2013*

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and offer congratulations to U.S. Bank, who was awarded the prestigious Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) organization.

The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 to recognize exceptional support of the U.S. Armed Forces from the employer community, and is the highest honor given by the U.S. government to employers for outstanding support of employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

U.S. Bank is one of only 15 honorees out of nearly 2,900 nominated companies. Through U.S. Bank's companywide initiative called Proud to Serve, thousands of veterans have been hired and supported over the past five years.

The numbers are impressive. U.S. Bank committed to hiring 1,000 service members and veterans between 2012 and 2013 and surpassed its 2012 goal by hiring 597 new veterans.

Minnesota is home to many great corporate citizens like U.S. Bank who are dedicated to supporting those who have made great sacrifices to defend freedom, liberty and our country. Congratulations to U.S. Bank for receiving the Employer Support Freedom Award and thank you for your support of our nation's veterans.

Floyd Sears was a national leader of grassroots military retirees who achieved remarkable legislative success in righting what they knew was a wrong. He represented the best of the military retirees whom we all represent.

I am grateful to Floyd Sears, a great American citizen in the truest sense, who joined the military in his youth when duty called and devoted his career to defending our freedoms, and then, in his retirement, exercised those freedoms to help make our country a better place.

Health care for our military community is a priority for me as it was for Floyd, and it is a privilege to represent the district that is home to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. Walter Reed is the crown jewel of military medicine, serving our country's active and retired military and especially the wounded who have suffered greatly in the most difficult circumstances. Congress has provided the resources that were necessary to ensure that the new Walter Reed can provide world-class health care to our uniformed service personnel.

However, Floyd's generation did not always receive that level of attention. Floyd became a leader in the effort to restore retiree health care benefits that his generation of enlistees was losing. These individuals had been promised health care upon their retirement when they enlisted in the military services in their youth. But those benefits were pulled out from under them when they retired after a career of at least 20 years due to unintended consequences of legislative and administrative changes in military health care.

Floyd recognized how these legal changes were stripping him and his colleagues of the retiree health care benefits that they earned and richly deserved. Nearly 20 years ago, he began his personal crusade to amend the law and restore those promised benefits. What began as one man sending letters to his local newspaper and representative in Congress became a nationwide grassroots effort connected by the Internet. Ultimately, Floyd, his good friend Jim Whittington and others, on behalf of their grassroots army, inspired the introduction of the "Keep Our Promise to America's Military Retirees Act," which led to the enactment of Tricare for Life, a great leap towards fulfilling Floyd's dream of full restoration of the benefits he had been promised.

Floyd never intended to draw attention to himself. But with his passing we can admire what one person can accomplish when he puts his mind, his heart, and his energy into it.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our gratitude for the extraordinary contributions that Floyd Sears, a truly great American, made to our nation.

Currently serving as the Fire Chief of the Modesto Regional Fire Authority, Gary Hinshaw also serves as the Fire Warden and Assistant Director of Emergency Services for Stanislaus County. Prior to joining the County team in June 2002, Gary enjoyed a long-term career in the fire service starting as a wildland firefighter with the United States Forest Service in 1973 on the Stanislaus National Forest. His first full-time position as a firefighter was with the Modesto Fire Department, beginning on November 21, 1978. He remained in that position for two years and was promoted through the ranks; four years as a Fire Engineer, seven years as a Captain, four years as a Battalion Chief and nine years as a Division Chief. He was appointed Interim Fire Chief of Modesto Regional Fire Authority on April 20, 2012.

During his career, Chief Hinshaw has championed the concept of a close and effective working relationship between the fire service and the pre-hospital medical community; he served as the Chair of the Stanislaus County Emergency Medical Care Committee.

Chief Hinshaw's assignments within the Office of Emergency Services have included: Chair of Stanislaus County Domestic Terrorism Task Force, President of Stanislaus County Fire Chief's Association, Operational Area Coordinator for the Stanislaus Operational Area Council, Stanislaus County Mutual Aid Coordinator, Operational Coordinator for Stanislaus County Arson Task Force, Region IV Representative to Cal EMA Standardized Emergency Management, Administrator of the Homeland Security Grant Programs, and Manager Stanislaus County Emergency Operations Center.

Chief Hinshaw has been involved in numerous instructional opportunities within the community, including instructor at Modesto Junior College Fire Science Program, County Public Information Officer Training, Weapons of Mass Destruction for First Responder Agencies, Incident Command System/Standardized Emergency Management System, High Rise Strategy and Tactics, and Strike Team Leader.

Chief Hinshaw has been recognized by his colleagues with many awards and accolades. He is well respected on a state and local level in the fire service and CalEMA arenas.

Chief Hinshaw is married and has a daughter, a son-in-law and a grandson. He is active in his church and enjoys photography, boating and the outdoors.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and commending the outstanding contributions made to fire service and Stanislaus County by Modesto Regional Fire Authority Chief Gary Hinshaw and hereby wish him continued success in his retirement.

#### A TRIBUTE TO FLOYD SEARS, A LEADER OF THE MILITARY RETIREE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

#### HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 9, 2013*

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Floyd Sears of Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Floyd passed away on June 5, 2013 at the age of 82.

#### HONORING MODESTO REGIONAL FIRE AUTHORITY CHIEF GARY HINSHAW

#### HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 9, 2013*

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor Modesto Regional Fire Authority Chief Gary Hinshaw, who announced his retirement after serving 35 years in the fire service.

#### HONORING VICTOR MOORE

#### HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 9, 2013*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a remarkable student, Victor Moore.

Victor is the son of Ms. Linda Moore and Mr. Vicky Ivy of Clarksdale, Mississippi.